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SUBJECT: CHINESE VICE FOREIGN MINISTER VISITS RWANDA

¶1. (SBU) Chinese Vice Foreign Minister for African Affairs Zhai Jun visited Rwanda January 25-27. During his stay, he met with President Kagame, Foreign Minister Mushikiwabo, other senior officials and businessmen. He also visited the main genocide memorial at Gisozi as well as sites outside of Kigali (NFI). According to local media, Jun said after his meeting with Mushikiwabo that China was "ready to work with other members of the international community to play a constructive role in promoting long-term stability and security in the Great Lakes region," and he reportedly praised improved relations between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) as well as Rwanda-DRC cooperation against armed groups in eastern DRC. (Note: A January 26 Xinhua story on the meeting between Jun and Kagame focused exclusively on bilateral China-Rwanda relations, and did not mention broader Great Lakes issues. End Note.)

¶2. (SBU) Local media also reported that Jun and Mushikiwabo on January 25 signed agreements on \$30 million in soft loans--financing promised by the Chinese to Rwanda at the November 2009 China-Africa summit in Egypt--but that the two governments had not yet decided what specific project(s) to support.

¶3. (SBU) The Chinese Embassy told polcouns that Jun planned to travel to Addis Ababa after leaving Kigali, and that he would not visit the DRC during his trip.

¶4. (SBU) Comment: Kagame has been outspoken in his defense of close ties, especially trade and investment, between China and African countries. Prime Minister Makuza attended celebrations for China's October 1 national day, an event the Foreign Minister would normally attend. The Chinese, for their part, make periodic high-level visits to Rwanda; Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi himself visited Rwanda in January 2009. End Comment.
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